SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

Vol. V, No. 22 | P.O. Box 6226A, Washington, D.C. 20015 | December 15, 1975

White House Science Bill Stirs Senate Opposition

The presidential science advisory bill which uneventfully transited the House November 4 (SGR Vol. V, No. 20) has collided with serious resistance in the Senate, and the outcome is uncertain. The development comes as a surprise, for Congressional enactment was generally considered to be so certain that two White House-appointed planning groups met December 1-2 to discuss an agenda for the new presidential setup, which bears the name of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (see page 3).

The Senate resistance is of the heavyweight variety. It is led by Senator Kennedy, with close flanking support from Senators Moss and Tunney, a trio who chair three separate committees that have agreed to cooperate in handling the legislation. Their strategic placement makes it virtually impossible to evade them, but, apart from that, the OSTP issue is so far down the rank of current senatorial concerns that very few of their colleagues are even slightly acquainted with the rudiments. In such circumstances, they will defer to the chairmen.

At issue, basically, is Kennedy's desire to impose on the White House staff structure a relatively powerful science advisory office which, in addition to serving the President, would be effectively accountable to the Congress. By contrast, the House version of the bill proceeds from the assumption that White House structure is mainly the President's own business; the House bill, consequently, was written in close collaboration with the White House, and has Ford's approval as the kind of science advisory apparatus that he desires.

Kennedy, who won Senate passage of a strong science advisory bill in 1974, reintroduced that measure last January, only to see the House go its own way in working out a bill with Vice President Rockefeller. Kennedy's bill, which has been designated S. 32 in its various permutations, including the latest, is what he, Tunney and Moss are now insisting upon following the House passage of its own version.

Specifically, the Senate bill calls for explicitly spelling out that the director of OSTP, who will also serve as the President's science adviser, will have authority to examine, and advise the President on, military research and development programs. The House version simply says that the director will concern himself with budgets and related matters of "all federal agencies," but does not spell out a military role.

The issue is a sensitive one because civilian scientists under Eisenhower, Kennedy, and to a limited extent, Johnson, used the White House science office as a staging area for various arms control schemes. When Nixon abolished the old Office of Science and Technology in 1973, some of its functions were reassigned to the Office of the Director of the National Science Foundation. Not among them, however, was authority over military matters.

The House version states that the OSTP shall "develop appropriate working relationships with the National Security Council the Domestic Council," a vagueness that reflects the White House preference for working out its own staff relationships. Kennedy's bill would give the science adviser membership on both councils.

To give the Congress various opportunities for ac-

(Continued on Page 2)

In Brief

That sudden and unexplained 5 per cent jump in gross cancer mortality, recently reported by the National Center for Health Statistics, is rocking the cancer establishment. The Center insists that the change is real and does not arise from statistical quirks. However, the National Cancer Institute's chief statistician, Marvin Schneiderman, says in an internal memo that "I would bet that it was a statistical artefact." Meanwhile, environmentalists have embraced the numbers as vindication of their warnings.

With competition to provide a site for the Solar Energy Research Institute building up around the country (SGR Vol. V, No. 17), the Energy Research and Development Administration has delayed issuance of guidelines for applications to January. Originally scheduled to be issued in November, the guidelines are the crucial groundrules in the contest, and ERDA says it needs more time to put them together.

Emilio Q. Daddario, director of the Office of Technology Assessment, has been elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. His candidacy irritated some would-be AAAS activitsts, who felt that the organization should minimize its links to government. What they fail to realize, however, is that the elephantine Association, which is eternally in search of a role, is immune to its presidents, good or bad as they may be.

ERDA Says It Wants Public to Take Part in Decisionmaking

The Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) is the latest federal agency to devise a peoples' participation program in an effort "to strengthen two-way communication between the public and the decisionmakers" at ERDA.

The plan, a draft of which is published in the November 26 *Federal Register,* proceeds from the assumption that the people have a right to know what their government is doing, and that they should be able to make their views known to government planners. And implicit in the plan is the notion that if ERDA can successfully conduct a dialogue with its environmentalist critics—which its predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission, failed to do—its program may receive wider public acceptence.

Thus, ERDA has planned a series of public meetings to explain its programs, the first of which was held in Seattle earlier this month and the next will take place in Denver on March 3-4. It is also hoping to gain consumer input through formal public hearings, advisory boards, and less formal liaison with consumer groups, and the plan calls for increased production of environmental impact statements, fact sheets, newsletters and so on.

The plan finally notes that it is not just public attitudes which need to be changed: "the most important condition for a successful program of this type is . . . a commitment by top management and all employees to participation of the concerned citizen in planning national energy policies."

Copies of the plan and further information are available from Bart J. McGarry, 8th Floor, ERDA, Washington, DC 20545.

SCIENCE ADVICE *(Continued from Page 1)*

cess to the OSTP, the Senate version not only matches the House provision for Senatorial confirmation of the director, but also calls for confirmation of the associate directors. In addition, it would require the office to issue an annual report—an old Congressional ploy for holding an Executive agency to account. None of these provisions, of course, can force the office to perform in a manner other than that desired by the President, nor can they require the President to heed advice for which he does not care. But they do expand the possibilities for Congress to stir up a lot of trouble regarding the President's management of what is presumably his own business.

Following passage of the House bill, the Administration, with Rockefeller handling the job, set off a barrage of letters and telephone calls from various scientific leaders, who urged Senate passage of an identical bill.

The Kennedy-Tunney-Moss coalition had previously decided, thought very quietly, to stand by S. 32. But the intensity of the lobbying effort, which included a letter from Rockefeller to Kennedy, urging that the House bill be accepted intact, apparently had an irritating effect. Following consultations with their own crew of scientific leaders, the three Senators agreed that the House-Administration bill was unacceptable. It is possible that they will yield a bit, but the mood being projected by some of their staff people is not conciliatory at present.

With the Senate aiming for a recess around December 19, it looks doubtful that final action can be completed this year. At this writing, hearings have not yet been held by any of the committees involved: Kennedy's science subcommittee, of Labor and Public Welfare; Tunney's science, technology and commerce subcommittee, of the Commerce Committee, and Moss's Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences.

The three can probably move swiftly, as Kennedy's subcommittee did last year when in a matter of hours it reported out S. 32 and sped it through passage on the floor. But then there will have to be a conference with the House Science and Technology Committee, which regards its bill as the end product of several years of meticulous deliberations that concluded with close collaboration with the White House. It is not likely that the House Committee will agree to radical revision of its carefully nurtured offspring.

Meanwhile, Kennedy, though long advocating a restoration of science advice to the White House, has indicated that he is not at all pleased with the cast of characters that the Administration has been assembling in anticipation of the OSTP. Over the past couple of years, Kennedy has laced most of his science-policy statements with urgings for getting the "people" involved in deliberations on science, technology, and medical affairs. It is not clear what the Senator has in mind in terms of the specifics for doing this. But Kennedy has said that he thinks the two advisory groups recently appointed by the White House contain too many members from high-technology industry and virtually none from the ranks of younger scientists and environmentalists.

What it all comes down to is that his approval is indispensable to re-establishment of a White House science office, and he is not in a good mood about the way things are shaping up. —DSG

Paving the Way for New White Office

The two advisory groups that have been appointed to do preparatory work for the gestating White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) are high-powered in terms of the professional status of their 32 members; they contain a broader spectrum of the "establishment" than did their distant cousin, the now-defunct President's Science Advisory Committee, and, finally, their duties and place in the federal hierarchy are exceptionally vague.

With seven meetings already scheduled through the end of next year, the two groups made a public debut in Washington Dec. 1-2 at what turned out to be a fairly sophomoric ramble for a collection of talent that would cost the federal government dearly if it had to pay the going rates. Of those half dozen or so participants who were willing to discuss their impressions with SGR, all felt a bit ill-used, though most volunteered that the proceedings were a start-up operation mainly of a get-acquainted nature.

Created in anticipation of Congress swiftly passing legislation to establish the OSTP, the two groups were announced November 12 by President Ford, with two oldline Republicans as their chairmen: William O. Baker, president of Bell Labs, who heads the Advisory Group on Anticipated Advances in Science and Technology, and Simon Ramo, vice chairman of the board of TRW, who heads the Advisory Group on Contributions of Technology to Economic Strength.

An announcement explained that the "Advisory Group on 'Advances' was established to provide advice on developments that may take place in science and engineering and to examine the national implications of these developments.

"The Advisory Group on 'Technology-Economics,' " it continued, "is intended to provide advice on issues that may lead to policy supporting an improved use of technology and fostering economic strength."

The titles are sufficiently broad to encompass a variety of subjects, but it is worth noting that they do not explicitly cover some of the traditional concerns of the oldtime White House science advisory apparatus, which included military technology, environmental affairs, and academic science. The stated explanation for this is that the problems have changed and therefore so has the focus of interest.

As for the backgrounds of co-chairmen Baker and

(Continued on Page 4)

Members of the advisory groups for the proposed Office of Science and Technology Policy are:

Advisory Group on Anticipated Advances in Science and Technology—

William Baker, Bell Labs, chairman
Ivan Bennett, NYU
Fred Bergsten, Brookings Institution
Lewis Branscomb, IBM
Arthur Bueche, GE
Joseph Charyk, Comsat
Edward E. David Jr., Gould, Inc.
Carl Djerassi, Stanford University
Robert Gilpin, Princeton University
Patrick Haggerty, Texas Instruments
Charles Hitch, Resources for the Future
J. Herbert Holloman, MIT
Edwin Land, Polaroid
Hans Mark, NASA Ames Research Center
Norman Rasumussen, MIT
Marina von Neumann Whitman, U. of Pittsburgh

Advisory Group on Contributions of Technology to Economic Strength—

Simon Ramo, TRW, chairman
John Baldeschweiler, Caltech
Manson Benedict, MIT
Solomon J. Buchsbaum, Bell Labs
Melvin Calvin, University of California
Harry Eagle, Einstein College of Medicine
Eugene Fubini, industrial consultant
Murray Gell-Man, Caltech
Arthur Kantrowitz, Avco-Everett
Donald Kennedy, Stanford University
Hans Mark, NASA Ames Research Center
Frank Press, MIT
Frederick Seitz, Rockefeller University
Charles Slichter, University of Illinois
Edward Teller, University of California
Charles Townes, University of California

Science & Government Report © 1975

Contributing Editors
Colin Norman, Pamela Moore

Editor and Publisher
Daniel S. Greenberg

Circulation Manager
Alice Anne Freund

Independently published by *Science & Government Report,* Inc., 22 times per year. Annual subscription: Institutions, $65 (two years, $120); individuals, $44 (two years, $75). Editorial offices at 3736 Kanawha St., N.W., Washington, DC 20015. Tel. (202) 244-4135. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC. Please address all subscription correspondence to Box 6226A, Northwest Station, Washington, DC 20015. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. SGR is available on Xerox University Microfilms.

Advisory Groups: Old-Line Republicans at Helm

(Continued from Page 3)

Ramo, both have logged long periods of service at the more elevated advisory committee tables of government, with Baker having long been a member of the super-secret President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. It is interesting to note, too, that while the Republican party is currently astir with its limited brand of idealogical strife, its technocrats appear to get on well with all factions. Under the auspices of the infamous Committee for the Re-Election of the President, Baker and Ramo, in October, 1972, co-chaired a window-dressing Science and Engineering Council in Support of the President. That, of course, was many political light years ago, but they apparently got on well with Nixon, and their relations with Ford have obviously not been affected by their close links to the politically isolated Rockefeller, who has served as a kind of midwife for the new White House science office.

The first day of the December 1-2 meeting was devoted to briefings by officials from the Office of Management and Budget, the State, Commerce, and Agriculture departments, and the Federal Energy Agency. Nothing transpired that would surprise a regular reader of a reasonably decent newspaper.

The following day, though equally informative, was at least a touch more entertaining, courtesy of Philip Handler, who, as president of the National Academy of Sciences, was on hand to enlighten the assemblage about his institution and the assistance it might render the OSTP.

Handler, who may be wondering why his office did not bring him membership on the distinguished advisory groups, lamented before them that the Academy's 112-year-old charter makes it virtually obligatory for the organization to accept without alteration the questions submitted to it by federal agencies seeking scientific and technical advice.

As a result, he said, the Academy often finds itself studying the wrong questions. Thus, he explained, the Environmental Protection Agency asked the Academy whether the auto industry could meet the emission standards of the Clean Air Act, when the more appropriate question, in his view, was whether the legislated standards were the most suitable ones.

Ramo then asked, "Has the Academy contemplated or sought a change in the charter?"

To which Handler replied, "No, sir, the charter is precious and I wouldn't touch it for the world."

This produced many puzzled looks and some grins around the big table, but the matter was not pursued.

Handler also performed his number about the nation suffering from "chemo-phobia," and repeated his preposterous contention that "DDT was defeated by a bumper sticker." He made no reference to the fact that its banishment was recommended by the President's Science Advisory Committee as well as several other professionally qualified government committees.

Next came Courtland D. Perkins, president of the National Academy of Engineering, who delivered a soporific account of his organization's activities.

Emilio Q. Daddario, director of the Office of Technology Assessment, followed with a description of OTA's work. Emphasizing that the process of gaining legislative confidence is a slow one, Daddario said that he thought the process was coming along satisfactorily. Perhaps his most interesting revelation was in reply to a question about the extent of OTA work on military affairs. Daddario said that, except for one minor involvement, it has so far been non-existent, adding, "Let's say, we've been careful."

The significance of this is that the Defense Department's backers already have their hands full with an assortment of weapons systems critics and would not take kindly to the fledgling OTA possibly assisting the pack with still more studies.

Anyone accidentally stumbling into the meetings, which were open to the public under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, would have sensed at once that he hadn't come upon a local chapter of Science for the People. Most of the dialogue was technocratic shoptalk, but the idealogical flavoring was straight out of big league industry. Edward Teller, of assorted fames, chimed in now and then to urge his colleagues to do something for nuclear power. Carl Djerassi, the Syntex contraceptive pill pioneer, sounded off against the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency for delaying new products coming to the market.

There is still no official word on who is to head the new office. Ramo is considered to be the most likely choice, but he continues to refrain from saying anything one way or the other.—DSG

SGR Holiday-Season Schedule

Because of a usual dearth of news of science-related developments in Washington during the holiday season—plus a prolonged vacation by our printer—the next issue of SGR will be on January 15, 1976.

NIH Committee Drafts Rules for Genetic Experiments

La Jolla, California. Following months of controversy and uncertainty, an advisory committee of the National Institutes of Health has drafted strict regulations to control the use of a revolutionary, but potentially hazardous, technique for manipulating genes from living organisms.

The committee's recommendations, which were written at a meeting here December 4-5, represent the latest, and perhaps the most difficult, step in an extraordinary attempt at self-regulation by a segment of the scientific community. The proposed controls, if accepted by NIH, are generally believed to be stringent enough both to protect public health and to protect the research from being regulated by legislation or other means.

The process of self-regulation began 18 months ago, when a committee of the National Academy of Sciences, led by Paul Berg of Stanford University, issued a call for a voluntary moratorium on some uses of the genetic manipulation technique. That call was followed by an unprecedented meeting, held in Asilomar, California last February, at which some 140 geneticists from around the world discussed the hazards associated with the technique and drafted voluntary guidelines to control its use (SGR Vol. V, No. 6). The NIH advisory committee has since been engaged in the taxing task of drafting acceptable regulations from the Asilomar guidelines.

During its nine-month attempt to write the regulations, the committee has been accused of watering down the Asilomar recommendations, it got itself into a procedural tangle, and some of its members have been criticized for having conflicts of interest (SGR Vol. V, No. 19). In the end, however, the committee has drafted regulations which in some respects are even stricter than the Asilomar guidelines, and its final product should draw the sting from most, but not all, of the criticisms.

The technique essentially involves the use of a newly discovered class of enzymes to rearrange genetic material in a manner which is unlikely to have occurred by natural evolution. The technique, for example, allows genes to be snipped from the DNA of animals and plants and transplanted into a virus or a bacterium, so that they will be copied every time the virus or bacterium reproduces.

The technique holds considerable promise for genetic research and, possibly, for medical therapy or even for enhancing agricultural production. But it also involves the potential risk that the viruses or bacteria which receive genes from other organisms could become endowed with unpredictable biological properties; in the worst imaginable case, an uncontrollable epidemic could be let loose. Though such horror scenarios are considered extremely unlikely, few scientists are prepared to state that the technique is entirely free from hazard.

One way to reduce the hazards is to use strict safety precautions, such as those used for handling hazardous viruses, to conduct the more dangerous genetic manipulation experiments. But there have been several infections acquired from research in even the most tightly controlled laboratories, a fact which does not allow total confidence to be placed in traditional laboratory safety procedures.

The Asilomar conference was thus faced with the dilemma that many scientists were anxious to get on with their research, but the dangers might not be easily

(Continued on Page 6)

Planning A Hazardous Test

The NIH advisory committee which earlier this month drafted regulations to control use of a newly developed genetic manipulation technique was faced with a situation in which there is virtually no information on the extent of the hazards associated with the technique. The committee therefore unanimously adopted a recommendation that a potentially hazardous experiment should be conducted at NIH, with strict safety precautions, to gain some information on the dangers.

Proposed by Sydney Brenner, a geneticist from the Medical Research Council Laboratory for Molecular Biology, Cambridge, England, the proposed experiment would consist of inserting genes from a mouse tumor virus (a polyoma virus) into a bacterium called *E. Coli,* and infecting mice with the bacterium. The infected mice would be closely monitored to see whether they develop antibodies to the virus. If they do develop antibodies, it would indicate that the hazards associated with the technique are real, for it would mean that the transplanted genes are still active.

A negative result would mean that, in this particular case, the genes are not functioning. Some committee members, notably Wallace Rowe, a virologist from NIH expressed some misgivings, however, that a negative result would be overinterpreted as suggesting that the technique is safe.

If NIH does carry out the experiment, it would be conducted using maximum safety precautions in a specially equipped cancer laboratory.

Genetics: Warding off Legislative Control

(Continued from Page 5)

controlled. Fortunately, it hit upon a neat solution - a few potentially dangerous experiments should be banned, the conference recommended, but most others could be carried out using strains of bacteria and viruses genetically crippled in such a manner that they would be unable to survive outside the laboratory environment. It was generally believed at Asilomar that such mutant strains could be produced quickly and everybody would soon be back in business.

Such expectations turned out to be unduly optimistic, however, for the construction of safer microorganisms has proved to be a difficult task, a fact which greatly complicated the NIH committee's attempt to write regulations.

The committee thus went through the following gyrations. Earlier this year, a subcommittee, under the chairmanship of David S. Hogness of Stanford University, drafted a set of regulations which, in most respects, conformed to the Asilomar guidelines. But that draft was significantly weakened by the full committee at a meeting held at Woods Hole in July. Some key members of the committee were not present at that meeting, however. The Woods Hole draft quickly ran into considerable criticism for watering down the Asilomar guidelines, and DeWitt Stetten, Deputy Director of NIH and the committee chairman, then appointed a subcommittee under the chairmanship of Elizabeth Kutter of Evergreen State College, to draft alternative regulations for the committee to consider.

The committee recommended, for example, that several types of experiments which are considered potentially hazardous should not be undertaken, and that most others should be performed only with conventional safety precautions and with the use of crippled strains of bacteria and viruses.

The committee therefore had three different drafts to consider when it met here earlier this month. It went through an extraordinary process. On the first day of the meeting, the committee, by a series of close votes, accepted weak regulations for some classes of experiments, and it looked as though it would produce a document which would be attacked for considerably weakening the Asilomar recommendations. But, on the second day, the committee promptly went back and made the regulations considerably more strict.

What happened overnight to make the committee adopt a more stringent attitude? Opinions differ, but one committee member who changed his vote said that he felt that in cases of doubt, the committee should err on the side of stringency. A factor which seemed to weigh heavily in the deliberations was the feeling that if the committee adopted regulations which demonstrably weakened the Asilomar guidelines, the ensuing cricicism might prompt regulation by legislative committees. Senator Edward Kennedy has already indicated that he, for one, is not very happy to leave the matter entirely up to scientists, and his Senate health subcommittee has already held a public hearing on the Asilomar recommendations. Kennedy would be likely to reopen the hearings if there were any suspicion that the committee acted in a self-serving manner.

The committee's move to adopt stricter controls was

(Continued on Page 7)

Following are the members of the NIH Advisory Committee on Recombinant DNA:

DeWitt Stetten Jr, Deputy Director for Science, NIH, Chairman

Edward A. Adelberg, Department of Human Genetics, Yale University.

Ernest H.Y. Chu, Department of Human Genetics, University of Michigan.

Roy Curtiss III, Department of Microbiology, University of Alabama.

James E. Darnell Jr, Department of Molecular Cell Biology, Rockefeller University.

Stanley Falkow, Department of Microbiology, University of Washington.

Donald R. Helinski, Department of Biology, University of California, San Diego.

David S. Hogness, Department of Biochemistry, Stanford University.

Elizabeth M. Kutter, Department of Biophysics, Evergreen State College, Washington.

John W. Littlefield, Department of Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Wallace P. Rowe, Laboratory of Viral Diseases, NIAID, National Institutes of Health.

Jane K. Setlow, Biologist, Brookhaven National Laboratory.

John Spizizen, Department of Microbiology, Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation.

Waclaw Szybalski, Professor of Oncology, University of Wisconsin.

Charles A. Thomas, Department of Biological Chemistry, Harvard Medical School.

Executive Secretary is William J. Gartland Jr, NIGMS, National Institutes of Health.

The following served as special consultants to the committee:

Peter Day, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

Paul Berg, Department of Biochemistry, Stanford university.

Rolf Freter, Department of Microbiology, University of Michigan Medical School.

Maxine Singer, Laboratory of Biochemistry, National Cancer Institute, NIH

Edwin Geldreich, Water Resources Laboratory, EPA, Cincinnati.

Emette Redford, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas.

Magnuson Turns Down Added Funds for NIH

The attempt on September 26 by Senators Cranston and Nelson to redirect funds from cancer and heart research to other fields of biomedical science was overwhelmingly defeated on the floor (SGR Vol. V, No. 18). It turns out, too, that despite a pledge by Senator Magnuson, leader of the opposition, that he would reconsider additional funds for the less-favored institutes of NIH, they got nothing when the appropriations subcommittee that he chairs took up a supplemental appropriations bill November 12 for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Nevertheless, for critics of the so-called War on Cancer, there was a bit of solace on the legislative scene. Magnuson accompanied his rejection of supplemental funds with a pledge to take up the matter again in a supplemental to the supplemental. And the House-Senate conference report on funds for the National Cancer Institute, issued December 2, made a small fiscal gesture toward the preventive camp. "The conferees agree on the pervasive nature of the problem of environmental carcinogens," it stated, "and direct the National Cancer Institute to utilize up to $3 million to initiate, through and with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, an occupational carcinogenesis program."

The report accompanying the supplemental bill was made public three days later. Referring to a number of witnesses who made pleas for additional funds for the NIH institutes that do not bear the magical "cancer" and "heart" labels, the report stated that "The Committee. . .is not convinced that because the cancer and heart programs have been greatly increased, the remaining NIH programs have not grown as rapidly. What has impressed the Committee are the results which the cancer and heart programs have shown and disseminated. Further funding levels reflect Congressional priorities and the greatest amount of interest and support has been for these programs."

House action on the supplemental also failed to provide additional funds.

The redistribution advocates are, of course, fighting against a solid majority that takes its voting cues from Magnuson, who dominates Senate proceedings concerning cancer research. Though solidly trounced in this opening round, they figure that Magnuson's acknowledgment of the issue is something of a favorable sign, and that they have more supporters than the lopsided vote indicates.

GENETICS *(Continued from Page 6)*

made easier by the fact that a genetically crippled bacterium and virus, which seem to hold promose of offering greatly increased safety, were produced a few weeks before the meeting. Although both need to be given more tests before their safety can be confirmed, it seems very likely that the tests can be completed and the strains made available very quickly. The committee was thus able to specify that a large number of experiments should use crippled strains, with some firm assurances that the strains would soon be available.

That, of course, was exactly the situation when the Asilomar guidelines were drafted, but in this case, the strains have already been produced, and have already been subjected to considerable testing.

The NIH committee's recommendations should be published in about a month's time. If NIH accepts them, they will then be published as formal regulations in the *Federal Register,* and in the meantime, it is likely that the NIH peer-review groups will be instructed to abide by the recommendations.

There is, however, one aspect of the committee's work which is sure to be criticized. The committee contained no non-scientists among its voting members, and it is therefore subject to the charge that it suffers from at least a potential conflict of interest. But the severity of the restrictions it proposed should blunt such criticisms.—CN

Subscription Form

Science & Government Report
Northwest Station
Box 6226A
Washington, D.C. 20015

☐ Renew my subscription ☐ Check enclosed
☐ Enter my subscription ☐ Please bill

Institutional subscribers: one year, $65 ☐; two years, $120 ☐
Individual subscribers: one year, $44 ☐; two years, $75 ☐

(Overseas airmail, $17.50 per year additional.)

Name_____

Address_____

_____ Zip

Ex- HEW Health Chief Assails Cancer Program

Charles C. Edwards, whose service as Assistant Secretary of Health at HEW coincided with a major period in the implementation of the National Cancer Act of 1971, has emerged as one of the most outspoken critics of the programs that have blossomed under the Act.

Edwards, who was appointed to the post in April, 1973, has publicly inveighed against the Act on several occasions since joining private industry at the beginning of this year. However, his bluntest attack to date was delivered November 12, when he appeared before a Senate appropriations subcommittee considering supplemental funds for HEW.

The hearing was a brief one, confined mainly to introductory remarks and the submission of prepared statements for inclusion in the hearing record. Before submitting his statement, Edwards said, in part, "I think we are creating in the US a cancer program bureaucracy that is going to be very, very difficult to come to grips with in the years ahead. . . .I think it is absolutely essential that we not create a situation at NIH where we have 'have' or 'have-not' institutes."

Edwards' prepared statement took the form of a modest statement of questions for which he promised no answers. But the thrust of it was clearly critical of the National Cancer Program.

". . .can we make effective use of the substantial amounts of money proposed for the National Cancer Program, to say nothing of the sums already allocated to it?" he asked.

"Again, there is no simple, unequivocal answer. Much as we prefer to believe that the biomedical research community has the capability to absorb and effectively use substantial amounts of additional funds—and that must be one of the tacit assumptions on which the National Cancer Program is based—my own judgment is that such an assumption is unwarranted.

"Meritorious research undertakings do not spring *de novo* in response to the promise of funds, nor do the capable and innovative men and women who must conceive and pursue such proposals," Edwards stated. "Significant ideas in the health sciences, as in every kind of human inquiry, are rare events, as the history of medicine amply demonstrates.

"Therefore," he continued, "it becomes necessary to pour funds into what are essentially service activities, some of which are intended to explore research results that on sober reflection, and in the absence of the surfeit of funds, might properly be given a rather low priority."

NIH Peer-Review Hearings

Public hearings on the NIH peer-review system are going to be held in Chicago, San Francisco, and Bethesda on February 12, 19, and 26, respectively, as part of a major internal review of NIH's methods for awarding research funds.

According to an announcement in the *Federal Register,* the hearings will explore, among other things, the effectiveness of the system "in serving and responding to societal needs and expectations for biomedical research on disease related problems" and in maintaining scientific quality of federally supported biomedical research."

Further information on times, places and procedures for giving evidence is available from Mathilde Solowey, NIH Peer Review Study Team, Room 4A35, Bldg 31, Bethesda, Md. 20014.

Science & Government Report
Northwest Station
Box 6226A
Washington, D.C. 20015

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C.

-00006 99/99
XEROX UNIV MICROFILMS
300 N ZEEB RD
ANN ARBOR MI 48106